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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the degree to which hand positions indicated how viewers reacted to stimuli. The hand positions (touching head, body, waist, and external objects) of three intermediate students were observed and recorded at 10-second intervals. There was a significant difference in body touching as the two films were viewed. It was found that the film with the violent theme had a high frequency of body and below waist touching, while the film with academic emphasis had a high degree of head and external touching. (Author)

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The purpose of this study was to ascertain the degree to which hand positions indicated how viewers reacted to stimuli. Three intermediate students were observed as hand positions (touching head, body, waist and external objects) were scored at 10 second intervals. There was a significant difference in body touching as the two films were viewed. It was found that the film with the violent theme had a high frequency of body and below waist touching, while the film with academic emphasis had a high degree of head and external touching.

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SPECIAL REPORT No. 7218
COMPUTER-BASED PROJECT for the EVALUATION of MEDIA for the HANDICAPPED

Title: BODY TOUCHING WHILE WATCHING MEDIA

BACKGROUND

The Computer Based Project for the Evaluation of Media for the Handicapped, based on contract #OEC-9-423617-4357 (616) between the Syracuse (N.Y.) City School District and the Media Services and Captioned Films Branch, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (United States Office of Education) for the five year period July 1, 1969 through June 30, 1974. The major goal is to improve the instruction of handicapped children through the development and use of an evaluation system to measure the instructional effectiveness of films and other materials with educable mentally handicapped (EMH) children, in-service training and media support for special teachers, and studies related to the evaluation process and the populations used.

The Project has concentrated on the 600 films and 200 filmstrips from the Media Services and Captioned Films (BEH - USOE) depository; however, specific packages from Project LIFE, various elementary math curricula, and selected programs from Children's TV Workshop have also been evaluated. The evaluation model used requires that: 1) objectives of materials be specified and written; 2) instruments be constructed to test and measure effectiveness; and, 3) children be the major sources of evaluation information. A number of instruments and methodologies are employed in the gathering of cognitive and affective data from 900 EMH children and 80 special teachers to make the effectiveness decisions. Over half of the EMH population can neither read or write; therefore, a unique Student Response System (SRS) is employed, consisting of a twenty station G.E.-1000 SRS which can be operated in a group or individual recording mode and is connected to a remote computer system. The computer capabilities consist of remote telephone connections to the Rome (N.Y.) Air Development Command, the Honeywell time-shared network, and the Schenectady (N.Y.) G E Research and Development Center; and batch mode capabilities of the Syracuse City Schools, Syracuse University, and various commercial sources.

In-service and media support activities provide on-the-job training for teachers, teacher aides, equipment, and materials to the special teachers in the city schools. The research activities have centered around investigations and special problems related to the development of the evaluation model. The four major areas considered are: 1) testing effects, 2) captioning effects, 3) special student characteristics; and, 4) evaluation procedures validation.

Documentation of the major activities appear in the five annual reports and the 600 evaluations prepared on materials used. Staff members were encouraged to prepare special reports and the attached paper is one of these. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Computer Based Project, the United States Office of Education, or the Syracuse City School District, and no official endorsement by any of the agencies should be inferred.

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BODY TOUCHING WHILE WATCHING MEDIA

The fact that body areas have acquired meaning for the individual is advanced in various accounts by Freud (1960) and Fisher (1970).

Freud proposes that awareness of one's own body is a developmental process. This awareness would start with the mouth and move gradually further away until it leaves the body base for objects in the environment. The hands are used by a person as an instrument to reinforce or gratify these areas of the body. It could be hypothesized that the closer to the mouth or head the hands are placed the more a person is reacting to a stimulus in terms of internalizing in relation to his body. Thus the position of the hands may be an indicator to an observer how the person is reacting to a stimulus. Fisher suggests that hands to head would indicate a cognition response whereas hands on viscera is interpreted an emotional or protective response.

In this study the question - would children exhibit different body touching behavior during viewing of two different films intended for instruction is investigated. It is assumed that this behavior may be different for a film the viewers would like versus a film containing rather heavy academic content.

METHOD

Two 16mm sound, color films: NEIGHBORS #1454 (IFB, Ed. Media, 1968), and VOLUME AND ITS MEASUREMENT #1298 (Coronet, 1962) were chosen as fitting the two categories.

Neighbors was chosen because children who had seen it wanted to see it again. The film consists of a semi-animated story of two neighbors who end up killing each other over a flower -- it is quite violent in content. Volume and Its Measurement was chosen because it was basically non-human. The concept of volume and its measurement was explained. It was felt this information would be above the academic level of the children.

TREATMENT

Each film was shown to one class of 16 intermediate children on consecutive weeks during the regularly scheduled showing time at the project. Three children were selected in the front row and observed during the showing, using the instrument below.

INSTRUMENT

An observational procedure was invented which consisted of scoring the position of each hand as observed every ten-second interval for the length of the film. The number score consisted of five areas:

0- Touching something not listed.
1- Head above neck touching.
2- Body - neck to waist touching.
3- Waist down touching.
4- Touching both hands.

A stop watch was started as the first title frame appeared on the screen. An observation of the child was made on each ten-second interval when the second hand hit each zero ending number, for example 10-20-30 and was recorded on the form using the scoring number above. Each hand receives a score every ten seconds. For example - if the right hand is touching the head and the left hand, the chest, the student would get a R 1/2 L.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

To compare the two films, Neighbors (Film A) lasted seven minutes and ten seconds; therefore, only the first seven minutes and ten seconds of the ten minute Volume (Film B) was used. The observation data was analyzed into two summaries:

1. The frequency of shifts from one body-touching category to another. 1 / 2 shift 2 / 1

2. The frequency of touches to each category of the body for each individual. For example - student 1 touched his head ten times while watching one media and four times while watching the other.

The differences between frequencies were tested using the Chi Square statistic.

TABLE I: SHIFTS FOR TWO DIFFERENT FILMS

MEDIA		OBSERVED FREQUENCY	EXPECTED FREQUENCY	CONTRIBUTION TO CHI-SQUARE
Student 1	A	6	6.97674	0.136744
	B	14	13.0233	0.0732558
Student 2	A	7	5.23256	0.597003
	B	8	9.76744	0.319823
Student 3	A	2	2.7907	0.224031
	B	6	5.2093	0.120017
Total	Chi Square with 2 degrees of freedom			1.47087 NS

TABLE II: FREQUENCY FOR EACH OBSERVED CLASSIFICATION BY FILM

MEDIA		OBSERVED FREQUENCY	EXPECTED FREQUENCY	CONTRIBUTION TO CHI-SQUARE
Media A	External	7	31.1792	18.7508
	Head	14	26.1503	5.64543
	Body	71	36.711	32.0268
	Below Waist	92	80.9653	1.50391
	Hands	77	85.9942	0.940714
Media B	External	55	30.8208	18.9688
	Head	38	25.8497	5.71107
	Body	2	36.289	32.3992
	Below Waist	69	80.0347	1.52139
	Hands	94	80.0058	0.351653
Total Chi Square with 4 degrees of freedom				118.42*

*Significant at Alpha less than .05

This study found a difference in kinds of hand positions while viewing. In Film A a great deal of hand awareness and few shifts were expected, whereas in Film B, a great deal of awareness on body parts further away from the heart and a greater number of shifts were expected. There was a significant difference in the categories body touching. Looking closer at the body areas which dominate both media, it is interesting that Film A with its violent theme had a high frequency in Body and Below Waist awareness and Film B with its heavy academic content had a high Head and External awareness.

An assumption generalized from the data could be that when viewing a media which could be considered violent and threatening to the body one would try to protect themselves. From Film B the opposite could be true that one would be more interested in his head and externals when his mind was confronted with factual inputs.

REFERENCES

Coronet Films, Volume and its measurement, 16 mm Film, 1962.

Fisher, Seymour. Body experience in fantasy and behavior. New York: Appleton, Century Croft, 1970.

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10 20 30 40 50 60

R L

R L

R L

R L

R L

1 HEAD

2 BODY

3 BELOW WAIST

0 TOUCHING SOMETHING ELSE